

THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ROADSIDE ENHANCEMENT AND BEAUTIFICATION GRANT PROGRAM

Mission Statement: To provide a perpetual method to mitigate for vegetation removal in front of outdoor advertising signs. Emphasis shall be given to providing funds for public enhancements and beautification of the rights of way.

Fund Allocation: The Georgia Department of Transportation, hereafter referred to as the Department, may allocate monies each year to establish landscape projects in the State of Georgia. The total funds that will be awarded depend on the amount of money available each year as provided by Contributory Value fees paid to the Department for Vegetation Management permits.

The Roadside Enhancement and Beautification Council, hereafter referred to as the Council, established in accordance with Code section 32-6-75.1, assists the Commissioner with recommendations for expenditures from the Roadside Enhancement and Beautification Fund.

The funds may be used only for landscape purposes and for the furtherance of roadside enhancement and beautification projects along public roads in Georgia. One hundred percent of the awarded grant funds are to be used for plant material and its installation within existing right of way along Georgia state routes.

Individual grants shall not exceed \$50,000. The maximum fund allotment per county each year shall be \$50,000.

Award Selection: The grant period will run continuously each year. Applications with proposal packages shall be submitted to the District Offices for initial review. Conceptual projects selected on the District level shall be sent to the Landscape Architecture Section in the State Office of Maintenance for preliminary evaluation. Once evaluation for suitable design and safety is completed, the Landscape Architecture Section shall present the applications with proposal packages to the Council for review during a quarterly meeting. (Applications received by the Landscape Architecture Section by June 1, September 1, December 1, or March 1 of a quarter, will be presented to the Council in the subsequent quarter. Applications received after the above dates during a quarter will be presented to the Council in the next subsequent quarter.)

After consideration of the presented projects, the Council shall forward recommendations to the Georgia Department of Transportation Commissioner. Final approval of a grant shall be made by the Commissioner. The Department reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

Applicants and the District Offices will be notified of results shortly after the Department makes its approval choice(s).

Submittals Required: The original proposal in electronic form plus five (5) hard-copies must be presented for review to the Department District offices. The District Offices shall forward a copy of the electronic project submittal plus three (3) of the project hard-copies to the Landscape Architecture Section.

Once awarded a grant, grant recipients must furnish both electronic and hard-copy, working-drawing versions of landscape design documents and written perpetual maintenance plans for their awarded projects to their Department District Office for Special Encroachment Permit application.

Disbursement of Grant Funds: Contracts must be let by the grant recipient or local government sponsor by the end of one year from the Grant Award Date, and funds awarded must be spent by two

years from the date of award. Planting should be scheduled during the optimal time for the proposed plant material.

Once construction begins, invoices shall be submitted to the Landscape Architecture Section by the grant recipient on a quarterly basis, until the grant amount is exhausted, using an Invoice Cover Letter provided by the Department.

Who can apply for Grants? Any organization, local government, or state agency may apply contingent upon obtaining a [resolution](#) by a local government authorizing the group to apply for a grant. Once a grant is awarded and a Special Encroachment Permit is approved, the local government entity sponsor must sign a [perpetual maintenance agreement](#) with the Department for the project.

Submitting a Grant Application:

1. For information about Department grants and landscaping, visit the Department's [Landscape](#) web page and review the requirements for applications and enhancement of the right of way.
2. Download the Department's [Grant Application Form](#).
3. Fill out the Application and submit with the Proposal to the [District Office](#).
4. Download a [Resolution](#) Authorization form.

Proposal Requirements:

1. The entire Proposal package in electronic form and five (5) 8½ x 11 hard-copies.
 - a. The Application and Resolution.
 - b. A conceptual Landscape Plan according to the requirements of the Department's TOPPS Document [Guidelines for Landscaping on the Right of Way](#).
 - c. Cost projections for the landscape installation/construction.
 - d. A long-term Maintenance Plan of Action with cost projections.
 - e. Guaranteed funding sources for the applicant's contributions to the project.
 - f. Representative photographs of existing conditions.
 - g. Existing Plant inventory and any proposed demolition.

Items Not Covered by Grant Funds: Funds cannot be used for maintenance, design, administration, highway construction, office furnishings and fixtures, entertainment, lobbying, equipment, or mitigation.

Any cost for annual plant material (seasonal color) shall be provided by the applicant.

Submittals shall be confined to "softscape" landscaping only. Paving, benches, fences, flagpoles, signage, lighting, and fountains are not allowed.

An exception to hardscape exclusions is a percent of grant funding may be considered for irrigation on projects approved by the Department. Typically, irrigation is not allowed within medians.

Enhancement funds shall not be used for planting at private developments, individual businesses, or in front of advertising signs that solely benefits and brings attention to only those businesses, developments, or signs.

Scope: The project should involve the local community, display the right of way in an attractive fashion, and promote pride in Georgia.

Supporting funds in the amount of design fees and maintenance costs shall be provided by the applicant. Projected or actual amounts must be included in the application.

Once completed, the project should have a regular maintenance schedule to ensure its continued operation. A detailed annual maintenance plan of action with a tangible source of funding shall be submitted with the application.

Each grantee must agree to the grant certifications and conditions. The grantee will be required to respond to landscape review and comment by the Department in order to provide continuity and unity with other statewide project submittals and in order to comply with the Department's safety and maintenance standards. Refer to the [TOPPS document 6755-9 Landscaping on the Right of Way](#) for guidelines for final plan submittal. Grant award does not imply final approval of plan submittals. Projects awarded a grant must still complete the application process for a Special Encroachment Permit.

The project should have realistic goals and objectives. The project should make a long-term, visual, aesthetic impact while avoiding distraction to drivers on the roadway.

Record Keeping: Once completed, the project manager should keep a record of public comments to gauge the success of the project in implementing the goals of the grant program along with any letters of support from local organizations.

Any group that receives a grant will be required to submit a record of progress from start to completion, receipts showing how the grant money was spent, along with photos of the final implementation of the plan to the Department's State Office of Maintenance. Upon completion of the project, the grantee will be required to submit a concise electronic presentation file for use at one of the Roadside Enhancement and Beautification Council quarterly meetings. All reports are due as soon as possible.

Implementation: The applicant shall meet all of the Department's requirements for safety and MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) minimum standards for traffic safety found online at <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2003r1/Ch6A-E.pdf>.

The grant recipient is responsible for insuring the contractor obtain all required permits. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Special Encroachment permit
- Wetlands permits (COE)
- Building construction permits
- Erosion and sedimentation control permits
- Storm water management permits
- Any required local permits